

Utah State Library Strategic Plan Process

I. Mission:

This strategic plan model begins with the Mission Statement. While some models begin with the Vision before the Mission, we believe the “reason why you exist” comes before the vision. What is the library’s mission in the 21st Century? Is it different from or the same as it has always been? Many say it is the same because it is a “core” mission (*whatever that means in 21st Century context*), while others claim it has changed to address the changes that have occurred in the 21st Century.

[ALA's stated mission](#) is, “To provide leadership for the development, promotion, and improvement of library and information services and the profession of librarianship in order to enhance learning and ensure access to information for all.” Remove the words “To provide leadership for... and the profession of librarianship” and one could have a fairly generic mission statement for their library, in both content and timelessness. It would fit in a 19th or 21st Century library about equally. But would it provide a “relevant” or useful Mission Statement for USL as a 21st Century library?

According to the [ALA Office for Literacy and Outreach Services](#), “The concept for 21st century literacy reflects an expanded vision of what it means to be literate in a global information society.” So, literacy in the 20th Century was drastically different from literacy in the 21st Century. By extension, does that mean other 21st Century factors also make a significant difference in creating a 21st Century Mission Statement? I believe the answer is a resounding YES!

Why does USL exist? Most libraries exist for a more specific purpose than to pursue a generic mission, for example, of “Develop, promote, and improve library and information services in order to ensure access to information for all.”

Mission Statement:

Whether the library is public, school, academic or special has a huge impact on the statement. However, there are recommended elements of a Mission Statement that you may want to review before reconsidering USL's mission statement for the 21st Century.

A Mission Statement should:

- Provide a general statement of why the library exists.
- Clarify what USL does.
- Capture the essence of what you want USL to achieve.
- Have some measurable component(s).
- Be short and simple enough to remember (just a few minutes to memorize).
- Be an action statement (not passive voice).
- Be a living statement subject to revision as needs require.